

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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For Immediate Release

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Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on February 24, 2004, **GARNETT R. HILLARD**, a/k/a “**Bay**,” age 33, of DuQuoin, Illinois, was sentenced in United States District Court in Benton, Illinois. HILLARD, who had previously pled guilty to three counts of unlawful distribution of crack cocaine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, § 841, was sentenced to 170 months imprisonment, 3 years supervised release, and was fined \$300.

The evidence established that on March 24, 2003, and March 31, 2003, HILLARD sold crack cocaine to a confidential source working for police and an undercover agent. On April 3, 2003, HILLARD arranged to sell one ounce of crack cocaine to an undercover agent. During the attempted drug transaction, HILLARD threatened to kill the undercover agent if HILLARD learned that the agent was a police officer. The violations occurred in Carbondale, Illinois. At the time that HILLARD committed the crack cocaine offenses, he already had more than 15 prior criminal convictions and had served four prior sentences in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

The investigation was conducted by the Carbondale Police Department, Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Murphysboro Police Department, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Southern Illinois Enforcement Group pursuant to their participation in the Jackson County Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. Under the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors are working together to prosecute drug dealers, felons in possession of firearms, and criminals that use firearms to commit violent offenses or drug trafficking offenses in the system that will get them the most time. The Jackson County Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative is a joint and cooperative effort of the United States Attorney's Office, Jackson County States Attorney's Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Carbondale Police Department, Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Murphysboro Police Department, and Southern Illinois Enforcement Group.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Amanda A. Robertson.